



BY FRANK G. CARPENTER.

AM AGAIN in the great valley of the Nile. My first visit to it was twenty-five years ago, just before Arabi Pasha started the rebellion which threw Egypt into the hands of the English. I saw it again, seven years later on my way around the world, and I find now a new city which has risen up and swallowed those of the past.

The Alexandria of to-day stands upon the site of the greatest of the commercial centers of antiquity, but its present buildings are as young as those of New York, Chicago or Boston. It is one of the boom towns of the Old World, and it has all grown up within 100 years. When George Washington was President, it was little more than a village. It has now more than 400,000 people, and it will soon reach a half million.

Alexandria is a city with all modern improvements. It has wide streets, well paved as those of Washington. It has public squares which will compare favorably with many in Europe, and buildings which would be an ornament to any town on the continent. It is now a city of streets and automobiles. Its citizens walk or ride to its theatres by the light of electricity, and its rich men gamble by reading the ticker in its stock exchange. It is a town of big hotels, gay cafes and palaces galore. In addition to the 300,000 Mohammedans, there are more than 100,000 Christians, and even more living in it, and among them some of the smartest business men of the Mediterranean Sea. The city has become commercial, money-making and fortune-hunting. The rise and fall of stocks, the boom in real estate and the modern methods of getting something for nothing are its chief subjects of conversation, and the whole population is after the elusive piastre and the Egyptian pound as earnestly as the American is chasing the nickel and the dollar.

Alexandria's New Harbor.

It is easy to see where Alexandria's wealth comes from. It is growing fat from the trade of the Nile Valley. It is the gateway to Egypt and the Sudan, and every ship bound for India, Australia, and I can get a steamer any week which within fifteen days will take me to New York. The German lines are making a specialty of Egyptian passengers and freight, and they are gradually capturing the bulk of the Mediterranean commerce.

Alexandria has one of the best harbors on the Mediterranean. The port has been improved within the past few years until its arrangements for loading and unloading goods are unsurpassed. It has a breakwater of two miles, and the biggest ocean steamers can come right up to the quay. There are 2,500 acres of water in which ships can have a safe anchorage, and many vessels come here to coal. The most of the coal is brought from England, and left until the ships need it. Something like 12,000,000 tons were thus handled last year. Many of the steamers on their way into and out from the Suez Canal stop at Alexandria for fuel.

I do not know how much the harbor has cost, save that it runs high into the millions of dollars. When Mehmet Ali made Alexandria his capital the place was only a village with no connection with the Nile. He dug a canal fifty miles long to bring the Nile from Cairo to the sea. The canal was constructed by forced labor. The fellehens, to the number of a quarter of a million, scooped the sand out with their hands and carried it away in baskets. It took them a year to dig the fifty-mile ditch, and they were so overworked that 20,000 died on the job. Mehmet Ali also spent an enormous amount on the harbor, and Pasha laid out more than \$12,000,000 in the early years. Since the English took hold they have been steadily making other improvements, and they have works now under way which will cost millions more. The commerce of the port is increasing enormously, and the city promises to become even greater than it has been in the past.

Egypt in 1907.

The conditions at Alexandria are typical of the new Egypt. Old Mother Nile has drawn on the seven-league boots of modern progress, and she is growing in wealth like a Jimson weed in an asparagus bed. When I first visited her a quarter of a century ago, her country was a land of the dead, with the obelisks and the pyramids as its chief landmarks. The most interesting characters were the mummified kings of 2,000-odd years ago, and her chief visitors were antiquity hunters and one-lunged tourists, and a warm winter climate. These same characters are here to-day, but in addition have come the capitalist, the syndicate and the ardent dollar chaser.

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Egypt is now a land of banks and stock exchanges. It thrives with civil engineers, irrigation experts and men interested in the development of the country by electricity and steam. The delta, or the great fan of land which begins at Cairo and stretches out to the Mediterranean, is griddoned with iron tracks, and railroad trains now carry one almost to the heart of Central Africa. When I was last here, about sixteen years ago, Egypt was importing goods to the amount of twenty-five or thirty million dollars. She is now buying more than \$100,000,000 worth every twelve months, and her exports are more than twice what they were at that time. They now amount to \$100,000,000 a year, and are increasing right along.

In other letters I shall describe the wonderful banking developments that have gone on here and the extraordinary increase in land values throughout the whole valley of the Nile. I am told that in the lower delta farm lands are selling from \$500 to \$1,000 an acre, and that especially good tracts are selling even more. All the way up the Nile from Cairo to Assiut, for a distance of about 300 miles, you cannot buy an acre of cultivable land for less than \$200, and many a farmer would refuse to sell his little tract for \$500 per acre. Farms of lands have gone up in the same proportion, and are now from \$20 to \$50 an acre per year.

The same conditions obtain as to the real estate of the cities. Both Cairo and Alexandria are inflating like balloons. The price of land in Cairo itself, that a suburban development has begun, and in the future the poorer of the foreigners will probably have their homes outside the city.

I find Egypt changing in character. The Mohammedans are being corrupted by the Christians, and the simple living taught by the Koran, whereby the believer abstains from strong drink and other vices, has become infected with the gay and giddy pleasures of the French. Cairo, the city of the Arabian Nights, is fast becoming a city of Parisian nights, and the Mohammedan call to prayer is now mingled with the bacchanalian songs of the café chantants. In many cases the system of the harem is being changed for something worse. The average Mohammedan has but one wife, but in many cases he has a sweetheart in a house around the corner.

The ghoulies of modern science are robbing the graves of those who made Egypt a great empire. They are digging up the mummies of the pharaohs, and the skeletons of the common people. They are also digging up the tombs of the great men of the past, and the skeletons of the common people. They are also digging up the tombs of the great men of the past, and the skeletons of the common people.

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When I first visited this country the donkey was the chief means of transport, and men, women and children went about on long-eared beasts with Arab boys in blue gowns following behind and urging the animals along by poking sharp sticks into patches of bare flesh, as big as a dollar, which had been donated of skin for the purpose. The donkey and the donkey boy are here still, but I can get a street car in Alexandria that will take me to any part of the town, and I have to jump now and then to get out of the way of an automobile. There are cabs everywhere, and Alexandria and Cairo have thousands of them.

The new hotels are extravagant beyond description. In this, where I am now writing, the rates are from \$10 to \$100 a night, and inside the hotel walls, in my bedroom there is an electric bell, and I can go out into the hall and talk over the telephone to the consul-general at Cairo.

The hotel is packed with guests, and on its registered list are the consuls of all the great powers, the score and lords by the dozen. They come to dinner in steel pen coats and the women in silks with low necks and short sleeves. There is a babel of English, French and German going on in the drawing-room while the guests drink coffee and eat. The only evidence one perceives of the old Egypt is the tall minarets of the mosques, and the voices of the muezzins as they stand upon them and call out to the Mohammedans to come to prayer.

The Mohammedans growing rich. The changes that I have described are by no means confined to the Christians. The natives are growing rich, and the Mohammedans are for the first time in the history of Egypt, pil-

lating money. They are investing their surplus real estate and other values in the stock and bond markets of Europe. They are also investing in the Egyptian government, and the Egyptian people are becoming more and more interested in the development of the country by electricity and steam.

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